

Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. is the only Illinois Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee -- but he won't seek federal funds to build the Abraham Lincoln National Airport when Democrats take control of Congress next year.

"I firmly believe that the best way -- and only way -- to finance this airport is through the private sector. The evolving global aviation industry is increasingly reliant on private financing, and that makes sense," Jackson said.

"The beauty of private financing is that it comes with no cost or risk to taxpayers, yet airport revenues can be used to improve local communities. It's a win-win for taxpayers," said Jackson, who has spearheaded efforts of the Abraham Lincoln Nation Airport Commission's (ALNAC) proposed public-private partnership to construct and finance a new south suburban airport.

"The FAA understands. The State understands. ALNAC understands. The private sector understands," Jackson said.

"So even with the change of leadership in Congress, I won't pursue federal funds for the Abraham Lincoln National Airport. Chicago's share of federal dollars are already committed to O'Hare modernization.

"The FAA sees ALNAC's plan as the new model for airport financing because it provides distinct advantages for local citizens," Jackson said.

"Obviously, it saves taxpayers money. Additionally, privately funded airports can use revenues to pay for new roads and infrastructure outside the airport -- something that's prohibited at federally funded airports. Simply put: ALNAC's plan means more benefits and less costs for taxpayers," Jackson said.